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Prestigious recognition awaits best doctoral research

MIMOS' annual award continues to nurture university innovation

Innovation is a key driver of any economy in the world today, and universities play a fundamental role in strengthening the country's innovation capability by promoting greater research.

Looking at the history of innovation, the first programmable computer was invented by a British mathematics professor in the mid-19th century, while the biggest innovation in modern times, the Internet, was said to have been born in an American university in the early 1960s. Back home, a pre-JARING communication network linked four Malaysian universities as early as 1987.

With correct policies and strategies, technology know-how from university laboratories can dutifully flow to the industry, empower the country's economy and ultimately deliver real benefit to society. Malaysian universities, particularly the five Research Universities (RUs), are seen as high-calibre discovery centres in science, technology and engineering, with notably increasing output since their establishment as RUs.

Acknowledging the critical role played by university researchers in the development of a vibrant innovation ecosystem for Malaysia, the national R&D centre in ICT, MIMOS, aspires to recognise and reward outstanding research leadership in these RUs. The centre's MIMOS Prestigious Award (MPA) programme is entering its third edition and growing.

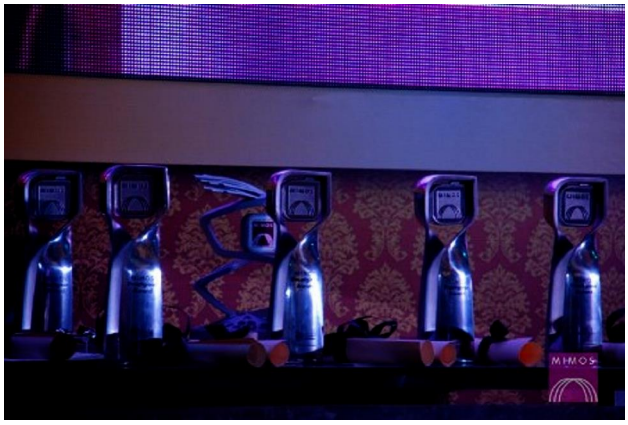
"One of MIMOS's roles is to spur the growth of innovative homegrown industries that are capable of making their mark regionally and globally. With the MPA, we want to inspire innovation by recognising academia research which can lead to successful commercialisation by the industry," says MIMOS Chief Executive Officer Datuk Abdul Wahab Abdullah.

The CEO says that the MPA opens opportunities for translating high-novelty Malaysian university technologies into commercial opportunities that can take the local industries to the global marketplace, create economic impact for the country and bring benefits to society.

Translating theory into practice has always been a much-elaborated topic. Now, the MPA presents a perfect opportunity for university researchers to turn their project theories into practice. It's a unique game where both academia and industry can collaborate to make a positive socio-economic impact," Abdul Wahab says. "Collaboration is one indubitable mechanism to translate research into productivity," he says.

Dean of School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Prof. Dr. Bujang Kim Huat says, "MIMOS's award is an opportune platform to highlight our innovation, and link with the industry to accelerate commercialisation. While your doctoral project may be laden with innovative ideas, the right business linkage is necessary to contribute to the greater good. Collaborations work best when collaborators are open to new possibilities. The MPA should be able to achieve this."

Meanwhile, Abdul Wahab says that with the MPA, breakthrough discoveries by the universities can be picked up by local SMEs for international commercialisation. "We want to marry academia novelty with the industry's solid business plan. The fresh wave of innovation from the university can catalyse the growth of Malaysian companies, so they would have the competitive edge to succeed and grow in the global market based on strong technology intellectual property," he says.



Applicants for the MPA will have their research projects evaluated by a panel of judges from the respective universities as well as from MIMOS. Projects will be judged, among others, on qualitative attributes such as innovativeness, creativity, expertise on the domain area, value creation, and commercialisation potential.

Abdul Wahab hints that apart from aligning to MIMOS 10 technology thrust areas, projects should also focus on key market sectors served by the R&D centre; namely Government Services, Education, Agriculture, Healthcare, Public Safety and Communications.

ñFocussing on the key economic sectors, the MPA augurs well for Malaysiaôknowledge-intensive economy,ò says Abdul Wahab. ñIdeally, weõre looking at evidence-based solutions that can lead to improvements in quality, productivity, cost, access and delivery across those sectors, but of course, it can go beyond those.

ñThe MPA aspires to elevate university-based research that can bridge the chasm between academic studies and real-life solutions. The MPA provides an opportunity to address unmet challenges ï to make use of research findings across different economic sectors to contribute to society,ò he says.

Abdul Wahab says the MPA is just the beginning of bigger things to come.

ñMIMOSôultimate goal is to build technology giants. And I believe Malaysian companies can be strong tech giants carrying our very own university-based innovations,ò Abdul Wahab says. ñI am sure all postgraduate researchers desire to build on their ideas into social and economic outcomes. MPA offers the opportunity to sustain your brainchild as a continuing initiative beyond the end of your doctoral dissertation,ò he concludes.

The MPA comprises an exclusively crafted trophy designed by MIMOS' award-winning industrial designers; a cash prize and a Certificate of Merit. For further details on MPA2014 contact Hazril Zuberi at hazril.zuberi@mimos.my

MPA2014 Eligibility Requirements

1. **Applicants must be a Malaysian citizen at the time of application.**
2. **Applicants must be a doctoral candidate completing their research for degree conferment in 2014.**
3. **The doctoral research conducted by the applicants must be aligned with one or more of MIMOS' technology thrust areas; namely Advanced Analysis & Modelling, Advanced Computing, Information Security, Intelligent Informatics, Knowledge Technology, Microenergy, Microelectronics, Nanoelectronics, Psychometrics and Wireless Communications.**
4. **The research conducted by the applicants must have a potential for commercialisation in the opinion of the panel of judges.**

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